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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please substitute paragraph [0038] on page 14, lines 4-11 of the specification with the following paragraph:

The method described above indicates that all nodes 50a at software level X+1 will be able to communicate with all other nodes 50b, 50c in the distributed environment using communication packet structure D. Moreover, all nodes 50a at level X+2 will be able to communicate with all other nodes 50b, 50c in the distributed environment using data or communication packet structure D*. Thus, even during the period of time that the distributed upgrade is occurring on multiple nodes, communication packets between different systems that may be at different levels can continue to flow and be understood, thereby allowing the system 500 to continue to operate.